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Cc: Carol JOHNSTON [cjohnston@ironboundcc.org]; ebbie Mans [debbie@nynjbaykeeper.org];
ouglas Sarno [doug@forumfg.com]
Bcc: []
From: CN=Dave Kluesner/OU=R2/O=USEPA/C=US
Sent: Mon 1/30/2012 4:01:18 PM
Subject: Re: The Record: Lyndhurst park to be tested for dioxin, PCBs
Kluesner.Dave@epamail.epa.gov
http://www.northjersey.com/news/138183899_No_Title_-_DIOXIN0127_TR.html
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Ana - all good points. Inviting Lyndhurst reps to a CAG meeting would be a logical step in getting their involvement from the ground up. As you know, at the moment we are in a conceptual phase, exploring possibilities and beginning the discussions, both with the CAG and the cooperating parties group. Once the validated data comes in from the river sediment, we'll see more traction in the discussions and planning and Lyndhurst involvement will be very important. I would also think that Lyndhurst will want to be very involved in messaging on both the river sediment potential exposures and park soil sample results. Let's discuss this further and thanks for reaching out.

Doug, your question to me in a separate email underscores the need for a message from EPA to the CAG on this. I sent the news clip as a bcc: to multiple groups of stakeholders, including the CAG. The sampling was not done out of a request from the mayor's office. We briefed county and local officials, including the mayor's office, to inform and coordinate sampling plans in Riverside County Park prior to sampling. Ray took the initiative to conduct this sampling as an outgrowth of both a) what we did last fall a half mile downriver in North Arlington where we sampled ball fields that were flooded along the Passaic and b) what we learned from recent preliminary, sediment data from the Cooperating Parties Group in that area of the river which indicates preliminarily that we could have a significant source of contamination.

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From: Ana BAPTISTA <abaptista@ironboundcc.org>
To: Dave Kluesner/R2/USEPA/US@EPA
Cc: Douglas Sarno <doug@forumfg.com>, Debbie Mans <debbie@nynjbaykeeper.org>, Carol JOHNSTON <cjohnston@ironboundcc.org>
Date: 01/30/2012 10:25 AM
Subject: Re: The Record: Lyndhurst park to be tested for dioxin, PCBs

Hello Dave,

I know we have a check in scheduled for next week, but in light of how quickly things are moving on a potential pilot clean up in this area, I wonder if anyone from Lyndhurst is being briefed thoroughly on this or should be invited to our CAG meeting specifically to hear the potential plans along this stretch of River.

It would certainly impact the usage of fields, and raise issues around planning for community health and safety issues in this area.

Ana

On Mon, Jan 30, 2012 at 9:41 AM, <Kluesner.Dave@epamail.epa.gov> wrote:
http://www.northjersey.com/news/138183899_No_Title_-_DIOXIN0127_TR.html

Lyndhurst park to be tested for dioxin, PCBs
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2012 LAST UPDATED: FRIDAY JANUARY 27, 2012, 7:31 AM
BY SCOTT FALLON
STAFF WRITER
THE RECORD

Federal investigators will test Riverside County Park in Lyndhurst next week for dioxin and PCBs after finding high levels of the two dangerous chemicals recently in the river next to the park.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is checking whether flooding last year from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee may have dumped contaminated mud from the Passaic River in the park, home of ball fields, playgrounds and walking trails.

"We don't have cause for immediate alarm, but it is a concern," EPA spokesman David Kluesner said. "It's out of an abundance of caution that we're doing this."

It is the first time high levels of dioxin have been discovered in the river outside of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site in Newark, several miles downriver. The former Diamond Shamrock plant manufactured the defoliant Agent Orange from 1951 to 1969 and dumped its byproduct, dioxin, into the river. Dioxin concentrations in fish and crabs in the Passaic River are among the highest reported in the world.

Dioxin is one of the world's most toxic industrial chemicals and a known carcinogen.

Samples were taken in October and November from the river along a mile-long stretch in Lyndhurst. There is a buildup of sediment at that point in the river — mile marker 10.9 — where the river makes a sharp bend just south of Route 3.

"The perception has long been that the pollution is down in Newark, we don't need to worry about it, when in fact it's in your back yard," said Debbie Mans, co-chairwoman of the Passaic River Community Advisory Group.

Kluesner said he couldn't make the levels of each chemical public because they are still being validated by EPA scientists.

Because the Passaic River is tidal, it is possible that the dioxin was swept upriver from the Diamond Alkali plant, Kluesner said. But he added that there are other potential sources of PCBs and dioxin from direct sources like factories along the river and indirect sources like runoff and sewage pipes.

"At this point, we don't know where it came from," Kluesner said.

Years of pollution

The Passaic River is a Superfund site. It is one of the most contaminated waterways in the United States, having had textile mills and other factories sprout up along its banks decades before the Industrial Revolution. State officials advise the public not to eat any fish or shellfish from the Passaic.

The samples from the river were taken by scientists working for a group of 70 local companies known as the Lower Passaic Cooperating Parties Group. The companies are funding a comprehensive study of the

lower Passaic in an agreement with the EPA.

The EPA tested a section of Riverside County Park about a mile south in North Arlington last fall after it had been flooded, but before officials found the high levels in Lyndhurst. Dioxin and PCBs were detected in the samples, but the EPA considered the levels so low that they did not prompt a health threat.

"The fact they didn't find anything in the North Arlington section is encouraging," said Anthony DeCandia, coordinator of environmental programs for the Bergen County Health Department. "I hope it's the same way now."

After being informed about the EPA's impending tests at the county park, Lyndhurst Mayor Richard DiLascio said he asked a chemical engineering firm this week to test township parkland and ball fields near the river as a precaution. Last fall, the township tested homes on nearby Peabody Avenue after the block was flooded in September. The samples did not find high levels of contaminants, the mayor said.

DiLascio and others say they hope all test results come back long before the weather gets better and Little League begins.

"We'll soon be going into the season of folks coming out onto the river and into the parks," said Mans, who is also head of the NY/NJ Baykeeper environmental advocacy group. "The [test] results can't get here soon enough."

The discovery may also have an impact on an ongoing lawsuit between the state and Occidental Chemical Corp. and Tierra Solutions, which inherited the liability for the Diamond Alkali site.

The lawsuit was filed in 2005 and is seeking to have the companies pay three times whatever the cost of a cleanup would be as a penalty for not acting fast enough to deal with the pollution.

Representatives for the companies have long argued that they are being singled out even though there are multiple sources of pollution in the Passaic River. Although the source of the dioxin in Lyndhurst is not yet known, Tierra spokesman Michael Turner said it is unlikely so much dioxin migrated upriver.

"It points to the fact that there are many players on the river," he said "I think it shows the state's lawsuit is irresponsible."

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